

Hand Washing Policy and Procedure



Policy and Procedure Relevant to:	All Staff, Educators & Families
Last Reviewed:	September 2021
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NQS:	2.1, 2.1.2, 2.2, 2.2.1

Purpose

Having and encouraging effective hygiene practices in early childhood is essential for reducing the risk of infection. Helping children to develop appropriate personal hygiene habits, such as hand hygiene, will become embedded as they grow and develop. It is important to work with families to ensure children follow simple hygiene rules by incorporating effective hygiene strategies in both the service and home environment.

Adventure Patch services are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all educators, staff, volunteers, families, and children by providing a safe and healthy environment. Effective hand hygiene significantly reduces the risk of infection and is therefore of the utmost importance. We aim to implement specific hand washing hygiene practices regularly to minimise the risks associated with cross infection of viral and bacterial borne diseases.

Implementation

Infection can be spread through direct physical contact between people, airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing or from contact with surfaces and objects. Children come into contact with a large number of other children and adults, play equipment, eating utensils and other resources whilst being cared for in Education and Care Services. This high degree of physical contact with people and the environment creates a higher risk of children being exposed to and spreading infectious illnesses. Whilst it may not be possible for services to prevent the spread of all infections, we aim to create a hygienic environment to minimise the spread of diseases and infections.

Effective hand washing is a vital strategy in the prevention of spreading many infectious diseases. Research emphasises effective and frequent handwashing as the single most important way to reduce the spread of bacteria, germs, viruses, and parasites that may



infect educators, staff and children in Education and Care Services and in our general population.

Micro-organisms such as bacteria, germs, viruses, and parasites are present on the hands at all times and live in the oil that is naturally produced on your hands. The use of soap or detergent and water remove most of these organisms and decreases the risk of cross infection.

Our service will adhere to National Regulation requirements, standards, and guidelines to support the effectiveness of our hand washing policy. We aim to educate and encourage children to wash their hands frequently and effectively which will help to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases, adhering to guidelines provided in *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* and recommendations from the Department of Health- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) to guide best practice.

To ensure the greatest level of personal hygiene Adventure Patch will ensure:

- all employees, parents, children and visitors wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds upon arrival to the services or, use the alcohol-based sanitiser
- hands are thoroughly dried using paper hand towel and disposed of in the bin provided
- disposable tissues are used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use
- hands are washed following the use of tissues
- hands are washed thoroughly using soap and water after using the toilet
- hands are washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after eating and touching food and eating utensils
- hands are washed thoroughly using soap and water before and after touching an animal, animal items, or animal droppings
- signage is provided to prompt visitors and children to wash their hands regularly and effectively when visiting our services.



The Responsible Person In Charge will ensure:

- educators and staff wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds regularly
- educators and staff wash their hands
 - before and after eating and handling food and eating utensils
 - before and after preparing bottles for infants
 - before and after applying sunscreen or other lotions to children
 - after using the toilet
 - after blowing their own nose
 - before and after changing nappies
 - before and after helping children use the toilet/potty
 - after supervising children near toilet facilities
 - before and after touching animals
 - after cleaning high touch surfaces- (tables, light switches, door handles, computers, iPads)
 - after cleaning or mopping floors
 - after changing learning environments – outdoor play area, indoor learning
 - whenever their hands are visibly dirty (after gardening, painting)
 - before leaving the service at the end of the day
- educators and staff adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures
- educators and staff wash hands before and after wearing disposable gloves when:
 - nappy changing
 - preparing food
 - administering medication
 - administering first aid
 - cleaning spills- faeces, vomit or blood
 - cleaning with disinfectant or chemicals
 - after handling garbage and/or contaminated materials



Educators will ensure:

- children are explicitly taught the correct process of hand washing
- children are carefully supervised when handwashing
- children are reminded to wash their hands frequently throughout the day
- they model effective handwashing procedures
- the required equipment and resources are easily accessible and appropriate to use- liquid soap, running water, paper towel

We believe the hygiene practices of children being cared for should be as rigorous as those of staff and educators. Our environment supports the creation of appropriate healthy hygiene habits to ensure lifelong healthy decisions and actions.

Strategies educators will use to encourage effective hand hygiene practices include:

- talking about the importance of hand hygiene
- talking about when hand washing is appropriate and why (in an age-appropriate manner)
- singing a song or reciting a poem/rap as a guide to how long it should take to wash hands (e.g. singing happy birthday twice is a sufficient time frame)
- using a clear visual poster with step by step instructions
- using positive language
- encouraging and using positive reinforcement
- ensuring equipment is accessible (liquid soap, hand towels)
- ensuring adequate supervision and assistance is available when required
- use STEM opportunities to teach about germs and prevention (ie: pepper and soap experiment)

Hand Drying

Effective hand drying is just as important as comprehensive hand washing. Research states that wet hands can pick up and transfer up to 1000 times more bacteria than dry hands. Drying hands thoroughly also helps remove any germs that may not have been rinsed off.



Adventure Patch Services provide children, staff, and educators with disposable paper towel to ensure effective hand hygiene. Bins are provided with foot control lids to dispose of used paper towel.

Where possible, our services aims to find sustainable alternatives to reduce environmental impacts.

Hand washing procedure

Wet hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap.

Rub soap all over your hands

Rub hands together for as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice or "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" "Row Row Row your Boat".

Don't forget the backs of your hands, your wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails

Rinse the soap off your hands under running water

Dry your hands using paper towel or under a hand dryer.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Where possible, staff will use soap and water to clean their hands however, if this is not possible and hands are not greasy or visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser may be used.

All children must be supervised when applying hand sanitiser to minimise the risk of harmful use.

Directions should be followed on how to use the sanitiser correctly. The effectiveness of an alcohol-based hand sanitiser to kill microorganisms or prevent their growth should be at least 60% alcohol.

As per National Regulations, a safety data sheet will be kept on file for any alcohol-based hand sanitiser used in the services.

Hand sanitizer procedure

Apply liquid to the palm of one hand

Rub it all over both hands until the sanitiser dries

This takes about 20 seconds

Be careful not to wipe the sanitizer off before it is dry.



Related information/Resources

Australian Government Department of Health [Practise good hand hygiene](#)
 Be a Soapy Hero! <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/soapy-hero>
 Child Care Centre Desktop- Handwashing posters (see below)
 NSW Department of Health [Handwashing poster](#)
[Teaching washing your hands with pepper experiment](#)

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
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 Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
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[Education and Care Services National Regulations.](#) (2011).
 Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
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 NSW Government. (n.d.).
 Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
 Safe Work Australia (2020) *Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19*
 Victoria State Government Better Health Channel [Handwashing-why it's important](#)
 Victoria State Government Health and safety advice for early childhood education and care services in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19). 2020

